



*The Advantages of the Kingdome of ENGLAND;  
boih abroad and at home, by Manageing and Issuing the  
Draperie, and Woollen Manufactures of this King-  
dom, under the Ancient Government of the Fellowship of  
MERCHANTS-ADVENTURERS  
of ENGLAND.*



GOVERNMENT is granted necessary, as over the persons of men, so of those things which are convenient and fit for the maintenance of humane Society.

Arts and Merchandise are the naturall effects and employment of this Society: And as without Government, men could not be reduced into order, no more could Arts and Merchandise be improved, to the benefit of the society of mankind, if the same were not by the Magistrate regulated.

There was never any Nation, but as soon as it became civilliz'd, it sought to employ it selfe, to make advantage of the growth and product of the Land upon which God placed the same.

God hath not blessed any Nation with that universall product of its own Countrey, as that it should not stand in need of something, whereof another may furnish it; and hath either given a superfluity to every Nation, by commutation, to supply one another reciprocally, or else the quickness and industry of spirit, invention and labour, to furnish their severall wants and necessities otherwayes.

The superfluity of *England* was Bestiall, and the product of its Mines: The Sheep rendred an overplus of Wools, and Wool-fells, the other Cattle, Leather, and the entrails of the earth, Lead.



Our Fore-fathers did a long time content themselves to be discharged thereof, even as nature, with a little art and workmanship, gave the same unto them.

The Neighbour-Nation of *Flanders*, not abounding in any thing of this kinde, did buy this wool, and Endraped the same, and grew more opulent by their Manufacture thereof, than this Nation, by the material it self.

The Grower of wool rested in the profit he made of his wools, at his own door, or his Countrey-market; and thence did arise a sort of men who bought the same up of them, and begot a Traffique between the Wool-grower and the foreign Endraper, which were from their establishing their Market for the stranger in some certain City, lying commodious for entercourse, called Staplers.

Yet still all along the Supreme Magistrate made Laws, both as to the sorting, combing, and packing of wools, as also for the said Staplers more regular issuing of the same out of the Land, granting them many Franchizes, Immunities, Priviledges, and Exemptions not communicable to every person, but to such only as were bred up in the mystery of their Trade.

So here is a Corporation established for the regulation of the first ingredient of Clothing; for their incouragement they have Franchizes, and for their regular issuing out their commodities they have Mart-Towns abroad, and at home: And all this found necessary by the wisdom of several Parliaments.

Franchizes and priviledges import distinction and separation between and from other persons, and without these no great affair can either be compassed or maintained.

In King *Edward* the first's time, there did spring up out of the Guild of *Mercers London*, a sort of English Merchants, who first began to attempt the bringing in the making of Cloth into this Land, and about the latter end of his Reign, viz. Anno 1296. they obtained priviledges of *John* the Second, Duke of *Brabant*, and stapled themselves in *Antwerp*, joyning in society with them all other English Merchants resorting to those parts.

After few years, King *Edward* the third, taking notice of their hopeful growth, did, to incourage this Manufacture, by many priviledges, invite over the Strangers, both Cloth-makers and Cloth-dressers, authorizing all by Parliament: insomuch, as at the latter end of his Reign, he and his Parliaments did adventure to prohibit the importation of foreign Cloth.

King *Henry* the fourth, finding how that the Government of this Trade (which hitherto had no other countenance, but by and under a forreign



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a foreign Prince) might be advanced by the concurrence of his Authority, did first, *Anno 1406.* grant these Merchants a Charter to govern this Trade, both abroad and at home; and he grounded the same upon the defect of good Government.

Now then, the conveniences of this Government will appear, from the benefits which arise thereby. First, to the publique, and then to the private Undertakers; and lastly, to the several Artificers and Workmen depending on Clothing, and the general influence the same hath upon the whole Nation.

*The publique Interest is.*

That nothing is more evident, than that the upholding this Government hath obtained, and gained this great Manufacture from the Stranger.

That it hath, all along, cherished amity and intercourse between this Nation, and its neighbours.

That it hath seasonably prevented all Innovations, wrongs, incroachments, and exactions abroad and at home, whilst the Supreme Magistrate continued its protection.

That it hath, in all times, advanced the vent of Clothing abroad.

That it hath augmented and secured the publique Revenue.

That it hath maintained and increased the Navigation.

That when either the honour of the Nation abroad, or the necessities thereof at home, have required the same, this Fellowship, because of their Government, was alwayes to be found, were still ready and at hand, and by their forward and dutiful services, have averted many imminent dangers on the Nation from abroad, and supplied many great occasions at home, as can be manifested by many particulars in the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth.*

That by its Courts and Staples, and their good Government abroad, the Princes and Republics of *Germany*, and the seventeen Provinces of the *Netherlands*, have outvied one the other, in offering them priviledges and immunities above all other Nations.

That hereby these Priviledges and Immunities are become the Rights of this Fellowship, not *ex gratia*, which hath in all Treaties been insisted upon.

And hence to the publick also, as well as to this Fellowship, have accrued these benefits and advantages.

That throughout so many Ages this Kingdome hath trained up, and been still supplied with knowing and experienc'd Merchants, as well in the true and good making of the Cloth, and other Woollen Manufactures of



this Land, as also in the improving of the vent and profit thereof beyond the Seas.

That the Fellowship may take and plant their Staple of Residence in any City of those parts, as they shall agree; and that the Supreme Magistrate shall provide, that they shall be therein priviledged, as they have been in any other Countreys, or places; that nothing shall be imposed on their Persons or Goods, but by their fore-knowledge.

That still, in all accidents of difference, or war, between this Nation and the Supreme Magistrates of the Low Countries, they are provided, by Letters of safe conduct, to retreat in due time with their Persons and Estates, and clear themselves of the Countrey, which was religiously observed, during the late breach with the States General.

That their Goods, by mistake of entry, are not subject to confiscation.

That they pay, neither to the Supreme, nor to the Inferiour Magistrate any Duties upon Clothes, Kerseys, or Bayes.

That in case of wrack at Sea, their Goods which can be recovered are restored upon reasonable Salvage.

That if by tempest, or other misfortune, any Ship of the Fellowship, designed for their Mart or Residence, enter any other Port, or Haven, that the same shall not be obliged to pay any Duty or Toles, except they break bulk.

That the said Fellowship may make their contracts with such conditions, as shall be to their most benefit, containing themselves within the general limits of the Laws of those Lands.

That the Members thereof may make their Wills, and dispose of their moveable Goods; and that they shall be of the same validity, as if made in *England*.

That the Fellowship shall have civil jurisdiction for the administration of Law and Justice over and amongst themselves, and their supposts, being English-men, according to their own Laws and Customes, and the priviledges by them, in those Lands, and elsewhere obtained and used.

That in no Contracts made with the Fellowship, the Debtor shall have any Letters of Respit, or the like, for prolongation of time, or protection against the Law.

That in criminal Cases, if any person accuse any of the Fellowship, the accuser shall be kept in Ward with the accused, till the delict be made appear; and for the default therein, the accused shall be forthwith discharged without costs or damage.

That none of the Fellowship shall suffer confiscation, or other damage in his Goods for crime committed by his servant without his knowledge.

Yet all this, upon condition that the Fellowship shall hold and keep their Court of Residence in those Lands.



*The priviledges and benefits of the Fellowships Residences abroad are.*

That in all cases, either of slaughter, wounding, or abusing the persons of any of the Fellowship, or dammaging of their Ships or tackle in the Harbour, or of stealing any of their Goods, speedy and exemplary Justice shall be done, and restitution or reparation be made.

That they shall enjoy Churches peculiar to themselves, which are kept in reparation by the Towns.

That they are provided of fair publick houses to keep their Assemblies in, and entertain their Factors and Agents daily, besides, houses for their Governour, Minister, Concierges, and free Hosts, Secretaries, Clerks, and all Under-Officers, according to the quality of every of them, all free of Rent, and repaired at the charge of the Towns.

That they enjoy, in these publick houses, freedome of all manner of Excizes, as to all sorts of Beer, Wine, Fuel, and all other provisions for house-keeping, and for all commerce, and the like, in all their private houses; so they keep no publick Table for Strangers.

That they, in these houses, are free of all Watchings, Wardings, or Quartering of Souldiers, and all contribution in that behalf, real or personal.

That no *English* or *Scotch* Garrison shall be lodged in their Residence, without the approbation and consent of the Fellowship.

That no *English-man* shall be admitted *Burger*, without the consent of the Fellowship.

That the Fellowship may make Arrest of the person and Goods of any *English*, by their own Officers, of their own authority.

That the Stranger may sue in the Court of the Fellowship any *English* man, and shall be obliged to abide and perform the Sentence thereof, and shall not withdraw his Cause, or Appeal.

That the Causes of all *English*, in the Courts of the Town, shall be preferred in dispatch.

That no Arrest or Attachment of any person or Goods, made by the Town-Officers, by Suit of any of the Fellowship, shall be dismiss, or discharged without their consent.

That no man of the Fellowship, either in his person or Goods, shall, in any civil Action, be Arrested, without the fore-knowledge and consent of the Governour, or his Deputy.

That in all cases of Capital Crime, or even of High Treason, committed by any of the Fellowship, his Estate shall, nevertheless, not be confiscated, but come to his heirs; neither the Goods of his Principals or Friends,



in his, or any other mens hands, be touched or forfeited in those Cities.

That none of their *Burgers* shall colour English mens goods.

That the *Tare* or allowance, upon defaults of English Cloth, shall be moderated.

That the *Fellowship* may chuse their own Measurers and Packers, Brokers, and other Officers.

That the *Fellowship* shall be provided of all fitting Dwelling-houses, Lodgings, and Pack-houses at a reasonable rent.

*The Conveniences and Benefits of the Fellowships Government  
in ENGLAND, are :*

To breed up Youth, for succession, to take care they be instructed by their Masters in their trade ; to see they be decently maintained, to provide they be , in due time, sent over by their Masters, to be acquainted, as well with the *Foreign*, as Home-trading ; and that they be there so overseen, and regulated , that they may be restrained from vice, and those inconveniencies which Youth are inclined, and liable unto.

To imploy no person to be a *Factor* abroad, but English onely, and such, so bred up, as aforesaid.

To prevent, that the Kingdome lose not a Subject by foreign Marriage, and that thereby the Mystery of their Trade be not communicated to Strangers.

To take care, that all Clothes and Woollen Manufactures of this Land be Shipped to no other part of their priviledges beyond the Seas, but only to the Mart, or Staple-Towns, both to maintain the Treaties in this behalf, and to increase as well the Manufacture at home, as the vent thereof abroad, and there to uphold the esteem and price thereof, which can only be done in a Mart-Town.

To appoint Shipping in the due Seasons of the year, and according as the Market abroad requireth, or encourageth them; and that no man have the advantage of going to Market before another.

To take order that the Merchant, full grown, and full of stock, do not carry away, or ingross the Commodity, but that there may be room and encouragement for Plants, and men of lower Estates, to imploy their stocks and indeavours.

To inspect into the true making of Cloth, and all other Woollen Manufactures.

To prevent the exportation of Wools and Fullers-earth, in which two points the Fellowship hath taken more pains, and been at greater expences, than all the Corporations, and Merchants in England.

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To give an account, from time to time, of all incroachments and attempts upon their Trade, and Priviledges beyond the Seas, and of the reasons of all decay or obstruction of Trade, both at home, and abroad; and to advise, in the Station, remedy and redress thereof.

To correspond weekly, and as there shall be occasion, with their Courts and Members, as well residing beyond the Seas, as planted throughout the Ports of *England*.

To carry through all which affairs incumbent upon them, they imploy persons of known worth, and integrity; in the first place, of Government, entertain Ministers of zeal, good knowledge, literature, and example of good life, for Gods due worship and Service in his Ordinances, breed up several men able to serve their Countrey, if need be, and to inform the same, of the state of foreign Nations, and their attempts and competition upon, and for this great Staple of Clothing; and that the Fellowship do relieve daily many distressed persons of this Nation abroad.